

Robert Frost Charter School: Integrating Montessori and Project-Based Learning

Proposed by the Robert Frost Charter School Foundation June 2011

Contents

- An Introduction 4
 - Montessori for Individual Growth and Learning 4
 - Project-Based Learning for Collaboration and Community 5
 - The Benefits of Integrating These Approaches 5
 - Why Charter? 6
 - Why Conway?..... 6
 - Seeking Sustainability..... 7
- A: EDUCATIONAL MISSION 7
 - Educational Philosophy 7
 - Key Goals and Expected Outcomes..... 8
- B: GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PLAN 9
 - The Founding Board 9
 - Board of Trustees 9
- C: METHODS BY WHICH TRUSTEES AND THEIR TERMS ARE DETERMINED 11
- D: GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF FACILITIES TO BE USED, OR POTENTIAL LOCATION IF SUCH INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE 12
- E: MAXIMUM NUMBER, GRADES OR AGE LEVELS AND, AS APPLICABLE, OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT PUPILS TO BE SERVED..... 13
 - The Basic Plan..... 13
 - Ramping Up Within the Montessori and Project-based Learning Approach: Building the School Community 13
 - Our Students: Drawn Together from Many Corners 14
 - Shape and Size of Our Classrooms 14
- F: CURRICULUM 15

Strategic Teaching and Learning	15
The Educational Environment	15
The Teacher’s Role: Observer and Guide.....	16
Creating 21 st Century Thinkers	17
G: ACADEMIC AND OTHER LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	17
Language Arts.....	18
Mathematics	19
History	19
Geography and Culture	20
Science.....	20
Practical Life	21
World Languages.....	22
Civics and Service	22
Technology	23
Visual and Performing Arts	23
Physical Education and Health.....	23
H: ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT OF PUPIL ACADEMIC AND OTHER GOAL ACHIEVEMENT	24
I: FOR SCHOOLS OFFERING HIGH SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS, GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL HAS PROVIDED AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION FOR ITS PUPILS.....	26
J: STAFFING OVERVIEW, INCLUDING QUALIFICATIONS SOUGHT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS	26
K: PERSONNEL COMPENSATION PLANS, INCLUDING PROVISION FOR LEAVES AND OTHER BENEFITS, IF ANY.....	27
Salary.....	27
Vacation.....	27
Sick Leave	27
Other Benefits	28
General Provisions.....	28
L: PUPIL TRANSPORTATION PLAN, INCLUDING REASONABLE PROVISION FROM THE CHARTER SCHOOL’S OWN RESOURCES FOR TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS RESIDING OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT IN WHICH THE CHARTER SCHOOL IS PHYSICALLY LOCATED	28
M: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES RELATED TO COMMITMENT TO NONDISCRIMINATION.....	29
N: METHOD OF COORDINATING WITH PUPIL’S LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) FOR MATTERS PERTAINING TO ANY REQUIRED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING	

METHOD OF COMPLIANCE WITH ALL FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS PERTAINING TO EDUCATIONALLY DISABLED PUPILS.....	29
Charter School Responsibility & Method of Coordinating with Student’s Sending School District.....	29
Charter Public Schools & Special Education.....	29
School District Special Education Responsibility.....	29
0: ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES.....	30
Admission Procedures:.....	30
Enrollment Provisions	31
P: PHILOSOPHY OF STUDENT GOVERNANCE AND DISCIPLINE AND AGE APPROPRIATE DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES TO BE USED FOR DISCIPLINARY MATTERS, INCLUDING SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION.....	32
Q: METHOD OF ADMINISTERING FISCAL ACCOUNTS AND REPORTING, INCLUDING A PROVISION REQUIRING FISCAL AUDITS AND REPORTS TO BE PERFORMED BY AN INDEPENDENT CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT	32
R: ANNUAL BUDGET, INCLUDING SOURCES OF FUNDING.....	33
S: SCHOOL CALENDAR ARRANGEMENT AND THE NUMBER AND DURATION OF DAYS PUPILS ARE TO BE SERVED PURSUANT TO RSA 194-B: 8, III.....	35
T: PROVISION FOR PROVIDING CONTINUING EVIDENCE OF ADEQUATE INSURANCE COVERAGE	35
U: IDENTITY OF CONSULTANTS TO BE USED FOR VARIOUS SERVICES, IF KNOWN	35
Charles M. Reigeluth.....	35
Juliet Fleischer.....	36
Christine Brown.....	36
Corinne Rocco	36
W: PLAN TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO PARENTS AND PUPILS.....	38
X: GLOBAL HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE	38
Y: SEVERABILITY PROVISIONS AND STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE	39
Z: PROVISION FOR DISSOLUTIONS.....	39
AA: IN THE CASE OF THE CONVERSION OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL TO A CHARTER CONVERSION SCHOOL, PROVISION FOR ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUPILS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO ATTEND AND TEACHERS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO TEACH AT THE CHARTER SCHOOL.....	39
BB: A PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE SCHOOL’S PUPILS AFTER THE CHARTER SCHOOL MAY CEASE OPERATION.....	39
CC: IN ADDITION TO AN APPLICATION, EACH CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICANT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD, SHALL PREPARE A PROPOSED CONTRACT.....	40

DD: AN OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN WHICH CLARIFIES EXPECTATIONS FOR EVALUATING THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM AND WHICH CONTAINS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT A FULL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN SHALL BE DEVELOPED AND READY TO IMPLEMENT PRIOR TO THE DATE OF THE OPENING.	40
Founding Members	40

An Introduction

The following pages articulate our request for a state-issued charter for grades K-8 creating an alternative approach for a high quality public education for the families of Conway, New Hampshire and the surrounding areas. We propose a powerful integration of Montessori (an individualized approach to skill acquisition and personal growth) and project-based learning (real world, collaborative experiences for the application of those skills). Mixed-age groupings and an approach to teaching centered on the child, rather than the teacher, will allow children to move at their own pace, enabling children of all abilities and backgrounds to be successful. The first phase of the School will begin with an elementary classroom of mixed ages (grades 1-3), and gradually add additional lower elementary classrooms as well as upper elementary and junior high classrooms (grades 4-6 and 7-8). We will also add kindergarten in the second year after the School is established.

The proposed School launch is September 2012.

Montessori for Individual Growth and Learning

The Montessori Method is a world-renowned educational pedagogy that has been very successful in developing academic, social and emotional skills in children, including important self-management and organizational skills. Developed in the early 1900's by Dr. Maria Montessori, the Montessori Method recognizes that children acquire knowledge directly from life experiences. Children are naturally driven to learn; what they learn depends greatly on their opportunities, their experiences and their environments. Dr. Montessori designed curricula, unique materials, and an individualized approach to education based on the needs of the "whole child" including academic, developmental and psychological. Her hands-on, exploratory approach to such abstract concepts as mathematical thinking and reading enables children of

many abilities and backgrounds to successfully master these skills. Beyond basic academics, the Montessori approach addresses the social and emotional development of children with an emphasis on making personal connections and fostering a sense of respect for others within the school community, the local community and the global community.

The Montessori Method is a child-centered approach to teaching, with the teacher as a facilitator of learning rather than disseminator of information. Children are encouraged to practice emerging skills for as long as necessary to master new concepts and are free to move on to new skills as soon as they are ready. Each child learns to take ownership of his or her own learning as they develop individualized learning goals and work to achieve those goals. Finally, children develop a deep sense of respect for themselves, their peers, their community and their greater environment.

Project-Based Learning for Collaboration and Community

Project-based learning is a learner-centered instructional strategy which provides students with the opportunity for an in-depth investigation of a topic which results in an outcome of significance such as a product or service. The students facilitate their learning by planning, implementing and evaluating a project that has real world implications. While the idea of project-based learning has been around since the 1900's, it has been slow to catch on in the United States due to concerns over implementation and the current focus in our country on assessment. However, Project-Based Learning has significant benefits for our students who will be entering a 21st century workplace where high value is placed on creativity, collaboration and initiative. While developing and completing a project, students need to use higher order critical thinking, analytical and collaborative learning skills as they build knowledge and solve problems. While executing projects, students are exposed to a wide range of work force skills including project planning, negotiation, decision making and time management.

Project-Based Learning embraces the growing diversity in today's classrooms because it provides opportunities for students of a variety of ages, abilities, intelligences, life experiences and cultural and ethnic backgrounds to make unique contributions, showcase their skills and be seen by their peers as leaders and experts. Students take pride in contributing to the project and to their community. This builds students' self esteem and respect among their peers. A cohesive, collaborative classroom community is built and higher levels of motivation and engagement are achieved as students make critical connections between the different disciplines within the curriculum, their classroom and the outside world.

The Benefits of Integrating These Approaches

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will bring together Montessori and Project-Based Learning, two powerful approaches to education. This unique model will motivate students by engaging them in their own learning from basic skill acquisition and mastery on through to the real-world application of those skills. The Montessori experience works to develop academic, organizational and personal skills and when those skills are then tested, explored, broadened

and applied in the context of a real-world collaborative project, the educational experience is enhanced. Student knowledge and understanding is broadened. Students' respect for one another is deepened. Their communication, problem-solving and decision making skills are developed. Students learn to reflect on their experiences, successes and challenges. Finished products, and documentation of the process will not only serve as "conversation pieces" around which teachers and students can discuss the learning that has taken place, they can also be shared with other teachers, parents, community members and others who have a stake in our students' education.

Why Charter?

The Conway School District has been identified as a District in Need of Improvement by the State of New Hampshire. While our schools work hard to develop important literacy and math skills, We, the Founding Members, have come together to create an additional public school option for children and families looking for an alternative approach to their child's education. We feel that the charter school model is a great fit. With a public charter we will have the flexibility to use innovative approaches for teaching and learning. The state of NH is looking to charter schools for their potential to facilitate the research and development of teaching practices, to provide the public school system with space, time and support to develop and integrate new ideas beyond the traditional methods of education. The Montessori Method, with its individualized approach and proven experiential learning methods, in combination with community-based, meaningful projects, will provide a rich opportunity to create a new approach to teaching that is very different from what is currently being done in traditional classrooms in the Conway area and beyond. Even at this early stage of the School's development, we have had the opportunity to collaborate with and get feedback from local administrators, teachers and community leaders who have expressed great enthusiasm for the project.

As our school program and culture grows and develops we look forward to building relationships with area colleges and anticipate that the *Robert Frost Charter School* will provide opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers to observe our classrooms and learn from our staff and families. Our emphasis on connecting our students with the greater community will allow us to take advantage of our local human and natural resources and foster within the community an improved value for education.

Why Conway?

The district has been identified as a District in Need of Improvement by the New Hampshire State Department of Education, with specific concerns in the areas of reading and math. Conway is a rural community with a tourism-based economy and a population that struggles economically. Business leaders are looking to diversify Conway's economy by bringing in technology-based companies, yet many businesses that have come to the area struggle to find qualified employees. Community leaders have called on our schools to address this issue, and

while much work is being done, the focus has been at the high school level. We believe the change needs to begin where a child's educational foundation is built - in the early years. The only private elementary school in the area is not a viable option for many of our families. The *Robert Frost Charter School* would provide an option for all families. Our individualized approach to learning will enable students who grasp new concepts quickly to advance at a pace that fits their needs while ensuring that those who need more time are not pushed on before they attain mastery of new concepts. This approach will ensure that there are plenty of students with high levels of academic mastery that can go on to fill advanced courses at the high school level, while at the same time ensuring that all children attain a solid level of proficiency in important basic concepts such as improved personal skills including organization, initiative, communication and critical thinking. Children will attain these skills in a school environment that enables them to thrive. As our children move through high school and beyond, our community will benefit. A better educated workforce will lead to more opportunities being created in the Conway area.

Seeking Sustainability

Public schools, including the *Robert Frost Charter School*, cannot and will not charge tuition. While a per-pupil allotment provided by the state will provide a basic, consistent level of funding, this sum is unlikely to completely cover costs, as has been the experience of many of our state's existing charter schools.

From the very start of this project, we have understood the significant need for building a sustainability and development plan that will include fundraising large and small, and the importance of crafting an effort that will garner support from families, community members and businesses. In addition, we will seek support from local and national foundations to assist with both startup and recurrent capital and operating costs. These approaches have been met with measured success by existing charters, and our work in this area, which has already begun, will intensify upon receipt of the charter.

A: EDUCATIONAL MISSION

The *Robert Frost Charter School* creates life-long learners by providing an intellectually rich and challenging experience delivered through the combination of the Montessori tradition and Project-Based Learning. In a safe and peaceful setting, dedicated educators foster students' individuality, creativity and critical-thinking skills to fully prepare them for future scholastic, civic and personal success.

Educational Philosophy

- Address the needs of the "whole child"- emotional, social, cognitive, physical and sensory
- Respect developmental stages of childhood

- Create mixed-age classrooms where peer-to-peer teaching and modeling is fully supported to enable the sharing of experience and knowledge, as well as the social and academic development of our students
- Provide materials and lessons that appeal to a variety of learning styles - kinesthetic, visual, tactile, social, auditory
- Allow children to take as much time as they need to master a skill and move on to the next skill when they are ready
- Develop individual work plans, with student/teacher collaboration, that encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning
- Promote executive skills including organizational, self-control, adaptability, initiative, memory, planning, self-monitoring
- Promote experiences where students create and develop real-world projects that enable them to apply new skills across content areas and develop leadership skills
- Use Project-Based collaboration to build a cohesive classroom environment where children are valued for their strengths and abilities
- Create a classroom environment where children with special needs are able to participate fully and are valued by their peers for their abilities
- Introduce and develop foreign language skills
- Provide an academic experience above and beyond the *New Hampshire Core Curriculum*, delivered through the *Montessori Scope and Sequence* and community-based project learning experience

Key Goals and Expected Outcomes

- **High Academic Achievement and Standards** will be established through the use and development of a curriculum that will integrate the *NH Core Curriculum* and the *Montessori Scope and Sequence*. With an emphasis on the mastery of materials across all areas of academic focus, our students will be expected to achieve or surpass their personal learning plans or stated Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals for the year. Faculty will utilize a variety of assessment methods in order to continually measure student growth, and plan appropriately for students' individualized learning plans. These will include individual portfolios and Montessori-based progress measures in addition to state mandated standardized testing. The complete academic program will foster the development of a collaborative learning community and promote responsible global citizenship; a peaceful approach to conflict; and the integration of curriculum partners from the greater community.
- **Personal Growth and Development** will flourish alongside academics through the Montessori curricula, with its emphasis on social responsibility, combined with carefully designed collaborative projects that highlight the individual skills and personal knowledge of our students to develop self-esteem, leadership and interpersonal skills. Traditional and non-traditional learners alike will become engaged and empowered in this safe and peaceful environment.
- **Student-centered approach to instruction** will define every aspect of the School. Our classrooms will be populated by Montessori-trained teachers who will utilize the Montessori approach to individualized instruction to meet each individual student's

academic, social and emotional needs and expectations. Every student will develop his or her own learning plan with the support of a teacher and will have the opportunity to experience success on a daily basis. Project-based learning experiences will also be developed based on student interest and community needs with older students taking on a significant role in the development of projects as well as their execution.

- **Percentage of children referred for special education will be reduced** in our school environment where all children have individual learning plans and the flexibility to choose when and how to engage in the academic elements that make up their learning plan.
- **Family Commitment** to the School's Mission and success will be a core element of building and maintaining our school community. Parents and Guardians will be integrated into the School's function, thereby fostering a connection to the education and social development of their children and to the success of the School.
- **Respect** will develop and flourish through the Montessori practice of grace and courtesy among students, faculty and families.
- **Celebration of Diversity** will ensure that students, families and faculty of all means, abilities and backgrounds will be valued for the unique skills, abilities and the perspectives they bring.
- **Service-Learning Opportunities through community-based projects** for students of all ages will ensure a connection to community and the development of responsible and engaged citizens.

B: GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PLAN

The Founding Board

The *Robert Frost Charter School Foundation* is a registered not-for-profit organization created to develop and sustain a charter school in Conway, New Hampshire. The Foundation is comprised of the seven founding members of the *Robert Frost Charter School*. Once the application for this charter is approved, this organization will serve to promote the school and select the first Board of Trustees.

For biographical information of the Robert Frost Charter School Foundation Board members see Appendix A

Board of Trustees

The *Robert Frost Charter School's* Board of Trustees will be the guardian of the school's Mission and will work to establish the School, monitor its health and viability, advocate for the School and its students whenever possible, and assess, with regularity the Mission's relevance and vitality. The seven to nine-member Board of Trustees will govern the *Robert Frost Charter School* with statutory responsibilities pursuant to RSA 194-B: 5 for "general supervisory control and authority over operations of the charter school."

Trustees will represent the diversity of stakeholders with a personal interest in the School's success, including school families, area colleges, business leaders and community members. Selection will be based on personal and professional background as well as a commitment to the School's Mission, support and sustainability. The Board of Trustees will be comprised of a minimum of seven (7) and maximum of nine (9) members. A minimum of two (2) and maximum of four (4) people will represent families of children attending the School; a minimum of three (3) and maximum of seven (7) Trustee positions will be for business community members, local community members, and/or educational or philanthropic sponsors. Teachers and the School Administrator will be ex officio board members. They will attend meetings and have a voice, but will not have a vote or attend executive sessions.

The Board of Trustees may establish other ex officio board members and/or advisors who will be non-voting. The Board reserves the right to alter the makeup of its governing body as per the School's needs.

The Board will have officers including: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. Role descriptions for Board officers will be developed by the Board and approved as part of its operational guidelines. Governing policies and bylaws, including policies that establish subcommittees and standing committees of the Board will also be established by the Board. Initial subcommittees will likely include: Board Recruitment, Finance, Marketing & Development, Curriculum, Student Recruitment, and Community Liaison, among others.

The Board will hire and oversee the initial school staff with Board Officers working most directly with the School Administrator. During the planning year, the Board will establish roles for the School Administrator and for the Board. The School Administrator will be empowered to direct and implement many operational decisions (e.g. day-to-day issues that arise in matters relating personnel, and daily school business and organization). Curriculum matters, including the coordination of special education services for students, will be addressed first by the Learning Coordinator who will work closely with the School Administrator (*see section J*). The School Administrator will always be responsible to the Board, in ways clearly defined. Protocols for communication and reporting will be established to ensure a successful and productive relationship between the School Administrator and the Board.

It is expected that the roles reserved for the Board will include, at a minimum:

- Hiring and firing of the School Administrator and staff
- Approval and oversight of annual budget and fund-raising programs
- Setting policy (e.g. code of ethics, personnel manual, etc.)
- Appointment of Board advisory members
- Delineation of educational priorities in collaboration with the Learning Coordinator and teachers
- Oversight for the School's growth plan
- Establishing a professional salary and compensation program
- Reviewing and approving significant contracts (e.g., for facilities and benefit programs)
- Oversight of major appeals

- Any other matters prescribed in statute or rule.

The Board of Trustees will meet monthly during the school year for strategic planning, to review and discuss School operations, and take action as per its governance functions. The Officers may be called upon to meet more frequently. Decisions will be made by a majority vote of Board members present at each meeting. "Present" will apply not only to those physically present but also to those who hear and participate through alternative means (e.g. conference call, video, etc.). The Board will obtain contracted services to assist in its work, as needed (e.g. consultants/experts in governance, curriculum development, setting of benchmarks, development and board training).

It is anticipated that a variety of contracted support services, in small amounts, will be necessary for the successful operation of the School and Board. Support personnel will provide office services as necessary (e.g. bookkeeping, business, purchasing, payroll, secretarial services, and the like).

The following principles of good practice for the *Robert Frost Charter School* are based on guidelines from the National Association of Independent Schools. The Board and the School Administrator will work in partnership to adhere to these principles.

1. The Board shall oversee the *Robert Frost Charter School's* Mission and objectives.
2. The Board shall review and maintain bylaws, and establish policies and plans consistent with the Mission.
3. The Board shall be accountable for the financial well-being of the School, including capital assets, operating budgets, fund-raising, and endowments.
4. The Board shall select and support the School Administrator and other staff.
5. The Board, or a committee of the Board, shall conduct a written annual evaluation of the performance of the School Administrator and work with the School Administrator to establish goals for the following year.
6. The Board shall evaluate itself annually and establish goals for the following year.
7. The Board shall keep full and accurate records of its meetings, committees, and policies.
8. The Board shall work to ensure that all of its members are actively involved in the work of the Board and its committees.
9. The composition of the Board shall reflect a balance of expertise and perspectives needed to achieve the Mission of the School.
10. The Board shall develop itself through ongoing education, new trustee orientation and leadership succession planning.
11. The Board shall assure compliance with applicable laws and regulations and minimize exposure to legal action.

C: METHODS BY WHICH TRUSTEES AND THEIR TERMS ARE DETERMINED

The Robert Frost Charter School Foundation is a non-profit entity with the mission of supporting the creation and sustainability of the Robert Frost Charter School in Conway, NH. Upon approval of this application, the *Foundation* will continue to oversee the School's development,

will appoint the School's initial Trustees. The overarching goal in selecting Trustees is finding members who support the Founders' vision and have a commitment to the School's Mission and goals. Founders will seek Trustees who bring professional expertise, including educational, financial and governance experience to the Board of Trustees of the *Robert Frost Charter School*. Appointment of Trustees will require approval by a majority vote of *Foundation* members.

After the initial Board of Trustees is put into place, Trustees of the *Robert Frost Charter School* will have terms of three (3) years. The initial Board will have staggered term completion to facilitate transition. Terms can be renewed by nomination and majority vote of the Board.

Once the Board of Trustees is in place, current Trustees of *Robert Frost Charter School* will select and appoint future Trustees and vote on policies for Board governance and filling vacancies. For purposes of conducting business, the Board will be subject to New Hampshire Right to Know Law, RSA 91-A. For purposes of lawful meetings, a quorum is defined as a majority of Trustees who must be physically present or participating through video or voice communication systems. Records and minutes of meetings will be kept in accordance with statutory guidelines. Board members are expected to regularly attend board meetings. The Board will consider regular participation to be crucial in order to ensure success of the Board's effort and the School overall. Board members who miss 50% or more of meetings may be replaced.

Openings on the Board will be filled by recommendation, nomination, and vote of a majority of the Board, keeping in mind the various stakeholder positions to be filled and a desire for diverse and balanced perspectives. Board members elected to fill out the term of a Board member will have a term that completes the remainder of the prior trustee's term.

D: GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF FACILITIES TO BE USED, OR POTENTIAL LOCATION IF SUCH INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

Since beginning work on this Application, the Founders have been investigating potential sites in Conway for the *Robert Frost Charter School*. Through research and visits to Montessori schools and successful multi-aged classrooms (both private and public), we have assessed our real estate needs regarding classroom, administrative and outdoor space. We have spoken with the Conway School District and the Town of Conway about possible space in an existing school or town building. We have also had some conversations with private property owners. The site search will intensify once the charter has been granted.

The typical Montessori elementary classroom is approximately 1,200 square feet. We will require additional space for offices and must have flexible outdoor space. In time we will need library, resource and technology rooms, kitchen and a multipurpose/gym area.

Initially, we anticipate leasing a site that offers some room for growth, handicap accessibility, playground and parking space. We will seek a site that is easily accessible by all members of the community.

E: MAXIMUM NUMBER, GRADES OR AGE LEVELS AND, AS APPLICABLE, OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT PUPILS TO BE SERVED

The Basic Plan

The planned opening of *Robert Frost Charter School* is September 2012. In our first year, the School will serve elementary-age students in grades 1-4 in one mixed-age lower elementary classroom, serving grades 1-3 and one upper elementary classroom which will serve students in grade 4. In year two, we will introduce a second lower elementary classroom and expand the upper elementary classroom to include grades 4-5. We will continue to add additional 1-3, 4-6 and eventually 7-8 classrooms as needed.

In year two, we plan to introduce kindergarten to establish *Robert Frost Charter School* as a complete elementary school, in keeping with the state's standard for kindergarten to be fully incorporated into the public school system. Though we will be open to applications across all grades in the early years of operation, once the School fills to capacity, admission will be determined by available space, and therefore, for most students, the entry point will be in either Kindergarten or first grade. Should the number of potential students exceed the available spots; a blind, lottery will be conducted to determine which of the older student(s) would be invited to enroll. (*Also see Admission Procedures*)

In our first year, we expect to have approximately 32 students, and by our fifth year we expect to be a community of nearly 152 learners, K-8th grade.

Ramping Up Within the Montessori and Project-based Learning Approach: Building the School Community

The Montessori pedagogy is significantly different from that of a traditional classroom, in part because it is a student self-directed environment, and in part because the carefully designed materials that students use to explore concepts are sequential, building upon a student's past experiences with these Montessori-specific materials. Therefore, the method of ramping up a Montessori school is slightly more complicated than a ramp-up program for a more traditional approach. Montessori experts agree that it can be challenging for most children beyond 2nd or 3rd grade to enter into the tradition if they have not had previous exposure.

Our School will begin by filling the lower elementary classrooms in order to build a cohort of Montessori-experienced students who will graduate into our upper elementary program. We will then move quickly to introduce kindergarten in year two and junior high by the fourth year.

We have planned our growth keeping in mind the following:

- The need to grow at a reasonable and responsible rate to best serve and support our students, their families and our faculty.
- The need to integrate students with and without Montessori experience, especially during the first few years of the School's existence.
- The need to establish multi-aged classrooms with the goal of 24 students with one Lead Teacher and one Assistant Teacher per classroom.

As with all charter schools, any student can apply for available spaces within the *Robert Frost Charter School*, and should the number of applicants exceed our capacity, our classrooms will be populated by children chosen via a blind, lottery system, organized by grade. Like any charter, we can expect that our student body will be a mix of many kinds of learners, from many different backgrounds.

Evidence from other independent charter schools in New Hampshire shows limited attrition. We recognize that families move, however. As a state-issued charter, *Robert Frost Charter School* will be able to continue to meet our students' educational needs wherever they reside in New Hampshire. In Conway, there is considerable movement of students from school to school.

Our Students: Drawn Together from Many Corners

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will be a welcoming community with a diverse student body. Our commitment to an individualized approach to instruction, and our focus on building a cohesive, collaborative community through Project-Based Learning opportunities will attract a variety of different learners, from those who would like to move at a faster pace than their peers, to those who need more time and support. We believe that these differences will make for a stronger learning community. To be successful, we recognize the need to begin as a modest-sized school as we will be mixing learning styles, experience, and economic status; differences that often divide communities. We will have to grow responsibly, making certain to provide sufficient resources to our students, their families and the School's faculty and staff.

Our classrooms will look and function very differently than a traditional public school classroom. To aid in the transition of our students with no previous Montessori experience, our lower elementary students will have full access to the key Montessori-specific materials used by pre-k and kindergarten students. Additionally, the Learning Coordinator and classroom teachers will develop personal learning plans for new students that will ensure that they are helped into the Montessori approach in whatever ways are determined to be necessary. There are many public Montessori schools that integrate tutoring (both support and enrichment) into their overall approach that will serve as a resource for us as we develop this program.

Shape and Size of Our Classrooms

As stated earlier, the Montessori classroom is a mixed-age classroom. Over time, the goal is that each classroom will become a community of learners, and that students remain together (as much as possible) with the same teachers and classmates as they progress through each 3-year block (kindergarten, grades 1-3 and grades 4-6 and eventually grades 7-8). To build successful Montessori teaching environments, we will aim to have twenty four (24) students in

each lower and upper elementary classroom, and eighteen (16) students in our kindergarten class. Each classroom will have one (1) Lead Teacher and one (1) Assistant. This class size plan will provide teachers with opportunities to provide individualized attention to their students and to observe each child, each day. It will also enable small-group work, as well as full-group work and projects. Most public Montessori schools around the country strive for that approximate number, though during the School's growth years there may be classes that are slightly larger, or slightly smaller. We will have additional teacher presence as needed during those growth years.

By year five we expect to have one (1) kindergarten classrooms, three (3) lower elementary classrooms, two (2) upper elementary classrooms and one (1) middle school classroom.

F: CURRICULUM

Strategic Teaching and Learning

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will blend the instructional strategy of Project-Based Learning with the Montessori educational philosophy and curriculum to create a unique educational model that creates a 21st century classroom where teachers act as facilitators of learning to motivate students to actively engage in their own learning from basic skill acquisition to exhibiting mastery by applying their acquired skills to real-world applications.

The Educational Environment

According to Tony Wagner, the author of "The Global Achievement Gap", one of the primary reasons our public schools are failing is lack of engagement. Our students are bored with the current public school environment and curriculum which teaches to the "middle" student and relies heavily on memorization and multiple choice assessments. In contrast, engagement is the guiding principle that will drive the *Robert Frost Charter School* teaching and learning environment. By blending the Montessori philosophy with Project-Based Learning, the classroom becomes a child-centered, active learning environment.

Dr. Montessori believed that children learn best in what she coined a "prepared environment," one that makes learning materials and experiences available to children in an organized fashion. Following this philosophy, the charter classrooms will be filled with manipulative, hands-on learning materials developed by Dr. Montessori, as well as complementary resources to foster Project-Based Learning, all of which encourage students to use all five senses to experience concepts they will come to master. In keeping with the Montessori philosophy, a visitor to our charter classrooms might observe many subjects — math, language, science, history, geography, art, music, etc. — simultaneously being studied by individual students or small groups of Project-Based learners, at times independently or with teacher guidance. Through order, repetition, exploration, manipulation, communication and collaboration, students develop a deeper content knowledge, make critical connections across disciplines and develop an understanding of their place in our rapidly changing world. Many of the Montessori

materials used by students as they progress are self-correcting and begin with basic concrete concepts, then move toward more complicated abstract principles. Over time, students naturally move beyond the need for using manipulative materials as memorization and skill mastery are achieved.

Educational research is quite clear that the “sage on the stage”, teaching to the middle educational model is not an effective teaching method for our 21st century world. At the *Robert Frost Charter School*, the teachers will not stand at the front of the classroom dictating one lesson at a time, expecting everyone to learn the same thing at the same time. Instead they will circulate among the students, who are freely moving about the classroom working at their self chosen, individual or project based activities. Teachers will guide their exploration, insuring that every student eventually experiences all subject areas and moves on to the next step as soon as he or she is ready.

With the *Robert Frost Charter School* model, a child’s individualism is respected and celebrated by allowing them to progress at their own pace with a clear, personal learning plan. Students are allowed and encouraged to move freely in their environment, spending as much time as needed with various materials or working on their projects.

The ground rules for this learning community are centered around respect for self, each other and property. Clear expectations are articulated to the students and progress is documented. Collaboration is fostered and successes, whether individual or collective, are celebrated by all. Our blended method fosters freedom of choice — what students want to learn and how— but also insists on the development of well balanced learners. Children and their teachers develop a work contract to ensure growth and success in all areas. The *Robert Frost Charter School* will follow the Montessori workday which is divided into two work blocks. For the elementary level, the school day consists of two work blocks that are 3 hours each. These extended work periods allow students to explore materials and concepts deeply and independently. It is here where children develop concentration, focus and a disciplined work ethic.

Multi-age classrooms further assist in solidifying the learning process — older children help the younger children, building maturity, nurturing, and leadership skills in the process, and demonstrating their own mastery of subject matter. Students model respectful work habits, communication and social skills, and a shared culture of responsibility, community and support for all. To know how to collaborate effectively and be responsibly competitive later in life, children need daily opportunities to solve complex problems while working with others. This is the educational approach the *Robert Frost Charter School* will offer.

The Teacher’s Role: Observer and Guide

The job of the *Robert Frost Charter School* teacher is to follow each child’s progress and create an environment where curriculum materials are made available for students to explore in an attractive, organized and progressive manner. The educator must have extensive knowledge of the use and progression of those materials and guide students in their exploration and

discovery. Encouraging children to develop a responsible work ethic and maintaining order and harmony in the classroom are equally important. *Robert Frost Charter School* teachers are charged with (1) meeting the students' physical, mental and emotional needs, (2) designing individual and group learning opportunities, and (3) creating extensive documentation of the progress and activity of all those in the classroom. Ultimately, our teachers support their students in ways that lead the children toward success, independence and the ability to work cooperatively with others. These educators know when to offer assistance, and when to step back and let self-discovery and independence happen. They trust and respect the child, so that the children will trust and respect themselves and others around them.

Social responsibility is part of every aspect of our blended method. Grace, courtesy, peace and a cosmic connection to all things is part of school culture. Because most of the Montessori materials are self-correcting, they afford children the ability to learn on their own, freeing teachers to give more one-on-one time to the children who need more assistance.

An effective assessment system uses multiple strategies to demonstrate growth and performance over time. Therefore, the *Robert Frost Charter School* will create an ongoing assessment model that blends the Project-Based Learning tools, Montessori methods of assessment such as the teacher's observation, record keeping, student portfolios and a growing selection of Montessori-oriented assessment materials with standardized testing, to meet state and national requirements.

Creating 21st Century Thinkers

The primary goal of the *Robert Frost Charter School* is to help each child reach his/her full potential so that they become independent, lifelong learners who take responsibility for themselves, for their classmates and for their surrounding environment. During their educational journey, students will lay the foundation to become 21st century thinkers with higher-order critical thinking, analytical and collaborative learning skills. On this path of self-improvement and self-discovery, they learn that they are not alone and that encouraging, supporting and working together with other learners not only leads to success for themselves, but for their classmates and their society as well. As they grow to understand their connection to, and responsibility for, their world, their appreciation for the gifts others have to offer is increased.

G: ACADEMIC AND OTHER LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following is a broad description, by subject, of our goals and approach to the K-8 grade curriculum. It represents a merging of the *New Hampshire Core Curriculum* with *Montessori Scope and Sequence*. Please note that a more complete curriculum will be established during our planning period as we assemble our team and work with consultants experienced in charter school development, project based learning and Montessori pedagogy. This will give our teachers and supporting staff voice in the process of curriculum development, and provide an

important opportunity for team building, consensus building, and the opportunity to incorporate a wide selection of ideas put forth by experienced team members.

Social Integrity

Outcomes:

- Students will collaborate effectively with their peers to complete project-based assignments.
- Students will value the contributions of all their peers and offer equal kindness and consideration to each other.
- Students will treat everyone with respect and advocate for the respectful treatment of all.

Curriculum: Using the principles of Project-Based Learning, students will be given daily opportunities to work with their peers to solve complex problems by sharing ideas, formulating a plan for success, delegating the responsibility of implementation, supporting each other to identify snags, adjusting the plan when necessary to develop a solution and celebrating the achievement together. Using the principles of Complex Instruction, students of low social status are chosen by the teacher to lead a group project themed around a subject the low status student is very good at or highly interested in. Through work on the project, the low status student demonstrates his expertise and his status and self esteem both rise.

Language Arts

Outcomes:

- Students will read at or above grade level with fluency, accuracy and enjoyment in a way that makes meaning clear.
- Students will write effectively and creatively in print and cursive for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Students will practice oral presentation across all curriculum areas to develop purposeful and articulate communication skills.
- Students will work together on projects that promote cooperation, problem solving, collaboration and supporting each other.

Curriculum:

Through use of manipulatives and a classroom environment rich in reading materials, our students will develop both encoding and decoding skills. Phonics, grammar, punctuation, word study, etymology, spelling and writing will be practiced by students daily or weekly. Literature, elements of a story, poetry, drama, the history of language and reference and research skills will be studied extensively by students at least once a year. Students will obtain a rich vocabulary and sophisticated oral and written skills that demonstrate mastery of grammatical concepts. Children will learn to be reflective about what they read and write and to make connections between literary themes, genres and their everyday lives.

Mathematics

Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate solid and applicable understanding of key concepts and principles central to the study of numbers and the mathematical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- Students will demonstrate solid and applicable understanding of key concepts, relationships and principles central to the study of plane geometry and algebra.
- Students will be able to form equations from narrative descriptions of real world problems and solve them correctly.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding and use of standard and metric measurement of length, area, volume, weight, time and temperature.
- Students will work together to apply math solutions to real world problems in a group setting.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding and use of fractions, decimals and USA monetary values

Curriculum:

Utilizing the Montessori Method, an extensive set of manipulative materials and the study of the history of math, our students' mathematics skills will move from a concrete to abstract understanding of numbers, operations, geometric relationships, elementary algebraic concepts and problem solving. Through individualized and group lessons and projects, students will learn sound arithmetic skills. They will manipulate fractions and decimals and explore concepts of equality and equivalence. Utilizing self-correcting Montessori materials, group teaching, graphs and charts, peer teaching and direct teacher guidance, a variety of paths to mastery is available to students.

History

Outcomes:

- Students will achieve comprehension of how time is measured.
- Students will develop a core understanding of the fundamental needs of humans and the different ways those needs have been met through the passage of time.
- Students will explore the steps of technological advancement that led humans from Stone Age existence to the development of ancient civilizations.
- Students will explore the contributions of ancient civilizations to our modern day existence.
- Students will have an understanding of, and appreciation for diversity and its role in societal development, both locally and globally.

Curriculum:

Our Montessori curriculum is grounded in cultural studies and awareness through the stories of time, life and civilization. The study of history begins with the concept time, then how humans

have met their needs over time, and finally the role those developments played in the creation of diverse cultures. Through use of the *Montessori Great Lessons*, children will attain a grasp of the origin of the universe, the formation of the earth, the timeline of life, and the history of human development and technology. With the use of timelines, charts, impressionistic lessons, manipulative materials, role playing and research opportunities, students achieve an overview of where *everything* came from and how it is all connected. They then have the choice and opportunity to do research or projects on the parts that most interest them. They discover how *they* are cosmically connected to, and influenced by, everything that came before them, and how what they now do impacts everything that comes after.

Geography and Culture

Outcomes:

- Students will experience the earth as a globe, various kinds to study different concepts. They will experience the continents as puzzle maps showing political boundaries.
- Students will study basic principles of mapping of the earth through simple map making, puzzles and other materials.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of landforms by building topographical maps.
- Students will explore the relationships between basic human needs and resources and the development of cultures, states and countries.
- Students will conduct an in-depth study of at least one of the seven continents per year, exploring biomes, plants and animals, cultural diversity, political boundaries, climate zones, topography, flags of nations, etc.
- Students will study tectonic plate movement through experimentation and maps and be able to identify how it has shaped the earth.
- Students will study the work of wind and water in shaping the earth through experimentation, maps, model building, research and reporting.

Curriculum:

Utilizing the Montessori approach to integration of geography and culture, our students will see and understand the relationship between human labor and economic development. By examining the shape, climate, biome and resources of the land, children come to appreciate that *where* one lives determines *how* one lives. This area of study explores the interconnection between physical boundaries (through the study of maps, land forms, earth features, etc.) and the development of countries, capitals, language, economics, government and culture.

Science

Outcomes:

Students will participate in group and individual lessons and activities, as well as independent research in:

- Astronomy – formation and life cycle of stars, formation of planets and solar systems, type, size, distance, name, order, etc, of planets and moons.
- Chemistry – elements formed in stars, periodic table of elements, properties of solids, liquids and gases and atomic structure of elements.

- Geology – Igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks – types of, how they are formed, properties like streak and cleavage, metals, crystals, uses of rocks.
- Biology – 5 kingdoms of living organisms, classification of plants and animals, parts of plants and animals and the purpose of those parts, types of plants and animals and their various life cycles and inter-relationships.
- Physics – types of force, using force to do work, various types of simple machines and how they work, both independently and together, research in how things work.

Curriculum:

Students will experience activities in various scientific disciplines including astronomy, geology, earth science, botany, zoology, chemistry, and physics. They begin their study of biology with the classification of organic and inorganic. Astronomy and chemistry are introduced by looking at the difference between energy and matter. Earth science and geology begin with modeling the interior layers of the earth. Students will employ the Scientific Method as they move through these lessons and into more advanced areas of study. These concepts are reinforced by the use of experiments and Montessori impressionistic lessons and charts designed to help children grasp complex/abstract concepts. Additionally, the approach will integrate hands-on study, by focusing on process and techniques of discovery. Collaborative group projects will be employed, as well as individual research to foster understanding and a sense of community.

Practical Life

Outcomes:

- Students will care daily for their school environment, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Students and faculty will work collaboratively to establish green practices within the school setting.
- Students will occasionally cook and prepare meals for their class, working cooperatively with each other.
- Students will work collaboratively to establish a caring community by developing and demonstrating kindness and respect for all members of the community.

Curriculum:

A unique element in the Montessori tradition is the area of Practical Life where skills pertaining to care of self, the environment and all living things are taught with the goal that students become fully capable and responsible adults. It is in Practical Life where the youngest students develop fine and gross motor skills learning to dress, pour, sort, wash and dry dishes and prepare simple foods, among other basic activities. As they mature, our students will also aid in maintaining the school both inside and out, all with an emphasis on being stewards of their community and surroundings. Developing green practices within the school setting fosters an understanding of how to minimize our negative impact on the natural world.

Practical Life activities encourage independence, responsibility, self-discipline and self reliance, and aid in the development of concentration and cooperation, thus expanding students' social

and emotional education and growth. It is also here where students develop and practice responsible social skills. By establishing a school-wide atmosphere of kindness and respect, children will work cooperatively with faculty and parents to create a safe and secure learning environment where differences can be recognized and valued, and diversity celebrated. This prepares the students for the experience of community service.

World Languages

Outcomes:

- Students will gain exposure to and proficiency in one or more foreign languages, developing skills in speaking, writing and reading.
- Students will be able to communicate daily needs and wants in a foreign language.
- Students will have a basic knowledge of foreign cultures.

Curriculum:

One or more foreign languages will be integrated into all classroom levels to expand their communication skills and exposure to other cultures. Through the use of supplemental Montessori materials, other self-correcting resources, as well as individual and group teaching, students of all ages will work toward proficiency in reading, writing and communication skills in the language(s) studied. Beginning with basic vocabulary and conversational practices, students will formalize their foreign language skills and learn more advanced concepts. In addition, students will study the culture of the countries where these foreign languages are spoken. The study of foreign language will enable our students to communicate with others within and beyond their immediate community, with an aim toward the development of a global citizenry.

Civics and Service

Outcomes:

- Students will practice core values of kindness and consideration in the classroom and beyond.
- Students will understand, appreciate and participate in community service.
- Students will understand and appreciate diversity of all kinds and its impact on *Robert Frost Charter School*, as well as the greater local and global communities.
- Students will participate in community service projects that reinforce the importance of caring deeply for our environment and for people less fortunate than ourselves.

Curriculum:

Service and responsibility for others is a core Montessori value and as such will play a key role at the *Robert Frost Charter School*. Our lower elementary students will have ample opportunity to volunteer both within the school community and beyond. As they mature, our students will integrate service learning across areas of their curriculum. Students will be encouraged and supported as they choose philanthropic endeavors to participate in at the local, national and international levels. Those experiences will then be examined and discussed in the classroom to develop each student's appreciation of cultural differences of all kinds.

Technology

Outcomes:

- Students will become familiar and comfortable with existing computer and internet technologies leading to use in research and communication across all disciplines.
- Students will understand the history and impact of technology on human society.
- Students will become proficient in information management via the use of the internet, databases, spreadsheets, graphing, power point, word processing, etc.
- Students will practice the SAFE use of social media, learning to protect themselves and others from cyber thieves, predators and bullies.

Curriculum:

Our technology curriculum will enable our students to work confidently with existing and developing technologies given the interconnectedness of our 21st century world. Computers, software, and internet access will be used as tools to aid in our students' educational needs and development. Students will be instructed in the safe use of the internet and how to protect themselves while gathering information. Safe and responsible use of social media will also be emphasized and practiced. This element of our curriculum recognizes that technology is the backbone of our economy and evolving culture and understanding technology is an essential skill for participating actively in the twenty-first century.

Visual and Performing Arts

Outcomes:

- Students will practice creative expression using a variety of artistic mediums.
- Students will explore patterns, form, balance, perspective and composition.
- Students will study various artistic movements, famous artists and their works.
- Students will listen to music from various cultures and time periods.
- Students will study a variety of composers, singers and songwriters and their works.
- Students will explore a wide variety of musical instruments and the concepts of rhythm, tone, pitch, dynamics and notes in scale.
- Students will be given performance opportunities in dance, drama, oration and puppetry.

Curriculum:

Using individual activities and group collaborative projects, students will have daily opportunities to create and express themselves through the arts. They will have daily access to listening centers, musical instruments, paint, clay and other mediums. In addition, instructional card materials, books and charts will provide opportunities to study art and music from other cultures throughout history, including classical composers and master artists. Periodic group performance projects will encourage whole body creative expression. Projects and study in all academic areas will incorporate artist expression and creativity.

Physical Education and Health

Outcomes:

- Students will participate in a basic physical education program aimed at developing strength, endurance and suppleness.
- Students will study human body systems and functions and the basic requirements for promoting good health.
- Students will explore human development through an age appropriate approach that promotes a healthy sense of self.
- Students will understand the value of teamwork and sportsmanship via cooperative group games and team sports.

Curriculum:

Students will have the opportunity to experience the importance of team building and teamwork through cooperative games and group sports. Our physical education program will be geared toward building physical strength and coordination to the best of each student's abilities, rather than competitive play. We will utilize local resources as well as explore national programs to develop a well-rounded physical education experience for our students. The Health curriculum will explore the function of body systems, such as skeletal, circulatory, digestive, etc. and basic healthy practices, like proper nutrition, regular exercise, adequate rest and renewal practices.

Our age appropriate human development curriculum will include aspects of healthy friendship and relationships, adolescent development, peer pressure, drug and alcohol education, human sexuality and balanced, healthy life styles.

H: ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT OF PUPIL ACADEMIC AND OTHER GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

In the Montessori classroom, the child is observed every day and those observations are recorded by the classroom teachers and serve as a core reference for developing progress assessment. In the *Robert Frost Charter School*, we will also utilize additional means of formal and informal assessment, including but not limited to objective and age-appropriate measures of literacy and numeracy skills, including spelling, reading, expository writing, history, geography, science and mathematics, to satisfy both national and state requirements, and to quantitatively measure each child's progress. We will comply with 194-B:8, V, "At least annually, and near the end of each school year, a chartered public school shall evaluate the educational progress of each pupil, as specified in RSA 194-B:3 II(h). Such evaluation shall include, but not be limited, to the New Hampshire statewide education improvement and assessment program, as provided in RSA 193-C. The cost of the state assessment program shall be borne by the state." The *Robert Frost Charter School* will also use assessment methods that correlate with skill areas across the curriculum, including activities using materials that measure mastery, developing student portfolios of work samples and group and individual projects and reports. These evaluation methods will be applied at least weekly, using results to make regular

adjustments to each individual's learning tools and strategies in order to ensure academic success.

During the planning period, the *Robert Frost Charter School* will further develop and evaluate assessment tools, schedules and practices for our students. While our youngest children will play a modest role in developing their individualized learning plans, as students mature their role becomes more significant in planning their course of study. Older students and their teachers will develop individualized programs and work together to ensure that all the set goals are met. At least twice a year, reports will be issued for student and parent review. Additionally, formal teacher conferences will be held with students and their parents/guardians. It is expected that these conferences will take place at least twice per year, in the early fall to establish academic, personal and social growth goals, then again in the spring to review progress and evaluate and improve implementation plans.

Throughout the year, students will be shown many ways to present and reflect on their accomplishments. They will write at least weekly in journals covering many areas of the curriculum. An important role of this journaling will be to aid students, teachers and parents/guardians in evaluations. Teachers will guide students as they develop their portfolios designed to capture and highlight pivotal lessons, projects and touch points that characterize each student's journey throughout the year and show each student's ability to organize what he has learned. Teachers will keep charts of progress for each child in math and language, recording completed activities and making note of those skills that need further practice. These tools and others that may develop during our planning and implementation periods will enable teachers and their students to articulate growth and identify difficulty, thus ensuring that the most successful learning can occur for each child.

While the *Robert Frost Charter School* Board and Faculty will work together to finalize an annual assessment calendar, it is likely that it will resemble the following:

- **Daily Observations** and recording of those observations using checklists and other means of adjusting the personalized learning plans and facilitating the teachers' work in recording and communicating each student's progress. This documentation will be made available to students and parents/guardians at any time upon request.
- **Student Portfolios of their best work** will provide our students, their teachers and parents/guardians with a powerful means of assessing working knowledge across all areas of the curriculum throughout the year.
- **Group Projects and Collaborative Presentations** will enable students and teachers to evaluate their skills at working cooperatively to solve problems, developing effective leadership, sharing and coordinating tasks and communicating efficiently.
- **Progress Reports** based on observation and linked to the individualized learning plan will be analyzed by teachers, students and parents/guardians. Issued approximately 4 times per year, these will assess academic progress as well as personal growth and development.
- **Teacher Conferences** will be held at the beginning and end of each academic year with students and their parents/guardians to establish or review learning plans, goals and progress.

- **Standardized Testing** will begin in third grade with the required New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), and will be given in accordance with the state's timelines. Additionally, any state and national testing requirements will be integrated into this schedule as dictated by the law.

I: FOR SCHOOLS OFFERING HIGH SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS, GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL HAS PROVIDED AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION FOR ITS PUPILS.

Not Applicable.

J: STAFFING OVERVIEW, INCLUDING QUALIFICATIONS SOUGHT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

To ensure that students at the *Robert Frost Charter School* are supported in their academic endeavors and personal growth, we will seek highly qualified, nurturing educators who will treat them with dignity and respect. Our educators will serve as leaders, guides and role models as they assume the responsibility of building cohesive collaborative classroom communities where our children will feel free to challenge themselves and grow as individuals and as part of a group. Our students will feel safe, and encouraged to mature and develop at their own pace as they work to reach their full potential.

Our classrooms will be run by one (1) Lead Teacher and supported by one (1) Assistant Teacher. Our Lead Teachers will hold, at minimum, an accredited and nationally recognized early childhood, lower or upper elementary, or secondary Montessori certification, depending on their grade level position. *The Robert Frost Charter School* teachers will be nurturing, reflective, and creative problem solvers who are committed to the School's Mission. Our Assistant Teachers will hold New Hampshire Teacher Accreditation and must demonstrate their ability to embrace our educational approach and School Mission as they work to support the Lead Teacher.

As per New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA 194-B:14. IV, a minimum of 50% of our Lead Teachers will hold New Hampshire teaching certificates or have at least three years of teaching experience.

In addition to our teachers, who will be responsible for the personal and academic growth of our students, we will create the innovative position of "Learning Coordinator", an individual whose role it is to oversee curriculum implementation throughout the school, who will hold at least one Montessori certification. This person will support teachers as necessary and coordinate with outside consultants to ensure that any outside programming correlates with the school's educational mission. The Learning Coordinator will serve as the liaison for special education issues and work with sending school districts to coordinate delivery of special services in a manner that is true to our schools' mission and values to the greatest extent

possible. In our dynamic teaching environment, professional development will be particularly important and our Learning Coordinator will work with our teachers, parents and administrator to coordinate professional development opportunities that meet the needs of our school, students, staff and families.

Our school will also have a School Administrator who will hold at least one Montessori certification. This individual will be responsible for the daily operations and management of the school and be the liaison with the state, sending school districts, and with the greater community for the purpose of securing/coordinating resources and fundraising.

Using a combination of a Learning Coordinator and a School Administrator will ensure that our school meets the requirements of all local and state agencies, is sustainable in terms of human and financial resources, and will serve to maintain a consistent school atmosphere and educational approach across all classrooms. This structure will also support individual teachers as they work to meet our school's goals. It is likely that in the early stages of our school's growth, the roles of Learning Coordinator and School Administrator will be fulfilled by one person.

K: PERSONNEL COMPENSATION PLANS, INCLUDING PROVISION FOR LEAVES AND OTHER BENEFITS, IF ANY.

Salary

Our School Administrator, Learning Coordinator and Lead Teachers will be paid a salary. The salaries of these full time personnel shall be paid bi-weekly (assuming approval is granted by the Commissioner of the Department of Labor).

Assistant Teachers, and other personnel, whether full-time or part-time, will be paid on an hourly rate as employees or as independent professionals based on negotiated rates.

Vacation

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will publish an annual calendar of holidays and vacations during which the School will officially be closed. Full-time teachers will also receive a maximum of three (3) days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave days must be used during the school year in which they are accrued.

Sick Leave

Full-time salaried staff will receive five (5) sick days per school year, to be used in the year in which they are accrued. Part-time salaried employees will receive two (2) sick days per year. For purposes of sick leave for part-time salaried employees, one day will equal the number of hours in that employee's regularly scheduled work day.

Other Benefits

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will offer health and other benefits to its full-time, salaried employees. Such benefits may be offered as a choice system with a specific annual election or as a specific insurance plan provided by the School with an employee contribution. Board policy and availability of specific benefit programs will determine the specific benefit type offered. Board policy and the requirements of specific benefit programs will determine whether, and to what extent, part-time or non-salaried personnel will be eligible for benefits and at what percent of full-time equivalent allocation.

General Provisions

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will comply with all federal, state, and local laws and rules related to pre-employment screening, hiring, employment compensation and leave, and reserves the right to amend the above personnel provisions as necessary to comply with applicable laws and rules, and as otherwise necessary.

L: PUPIL TRANSPORTATION PLAN, INCLUDING REASONABLE PROVISION FROM THE CHARTER SCHOOL'S OWN RESOURCES FOR TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS RESIDING OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT IN WHICH THE CHARTER SCHOOL IS PHYSICALLY LOCATED

As mentioned in Section D of this application, the site of *The Robert Frost Charter School* will be finalized during our initial planning period. We will seek a centrally located site both to accommodate the resources of the Conway School District, and for ease of access for families traveling from other areas. We have met with the Superintendent of SAU 9, Dr. Carl J. Nelson, and we will continue to explore the potential to transport our students via the SAU 9 transportation system.

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will follow the guidelines of 194-B:2,V which states: "Pupils who reside in the school district in which the charter school is located shall be provided transportation to that school by the district on the same terms and conditions as provided for in RSA 189:6 and RSA 189:8 and that transportation is provided to pupils attending other public schools within that district. However, any added costs for such transportation services shall be borne by the charter school. For the purposes of open enrollment, neither the sending nor the receiving school district shall be obligated to provide transportation services for pupils attending an open enrollment school outside the pupil's resident district." It is our expectation that students who attend *the Robert Frost Charter School* and reside in the host district shall have the opportunity to ride district transportation with the charter school providing for added route costs, if so billed.

Students attending the *Robert Frost Charter School* who do not reside in the host district will be required to arrange for their own transportation. The *Robert Frost Charter School* will make every effort to support families as they explore transportation options and facilitate ride sharing between families of students from outside the district through an online database or other means.

M: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES RELATED TO COMMITMENT TO NONDISCRIMINATION

Our school's success depends on a dynamic and diverse student body and staff. The *Robert Frost Charter School* will celebrate diversity in its students and staff and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic or marital status in the selection of students or staff or in the administration of the School or in any other way that is prohibited by law. The Board of Trustees will develop and adopt a policy of open acceptance and will create administrative procedures to address any discriminatory concerns.

N: METHOD OF COORDINATING WITH PUPIL'S LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) FOR MATTERS PERTAINING TO ANY REQUIRED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING METHOD OF COMPLIANCE WITH ALL FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS PERTAINING TO EDUCATIONALLY DISABLED PUPILS.

Charter School Responsibility & Method of Coordinating with Student's Sending School District

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will comply with all federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to New Hampshire charter schools.

Charter Public Schools & Special Education

As an open enrollment school, the *Robert Frost Charter School* will accept applications from any child who is a New Hampshire resident and will discuss the school with any interested parent. In accordance with New Hampshire law (RSA 194-B:8), the *Robert Frost Charter School* will not discriminate against any child with a disability as defined in RSA 186-C. Under New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA 194-B:11, III, when a child with disabilities attends a chartered public school, all current options available to the parent and the school district are retained.

School District Special Education Responsibility

ED 1104.01, effective 6/28/08, sets forth the following sequence of the special education process:

- (a) Referral;
- (b) Evaluation;
- (c) Determination of eligibility;
- (d) Development and approval of the IEP;
- (e) Placement;
- (f) Ongoing monitoring of the IEP; and
- (g) Annual review of the IEP.

It is clear pursuant to RSA 194-B:11, III, that decision-making responsibility for the special education process for children with disabilities attending a public charter school remains with the child's sending school district. In addition, RSA 194-B:11, III provides that the sending school district remains responsible for the funding for children with disabilities attending a chartered public school. Any federal funding or other funding available to a sending district related to special education, to the extent and in a manner acceptable to the funding source, shall also be directed to the receiving chartered public school on an eligible per pupil basis pursuant to RSA 194-B:11, IV. These important provisions allow the responsible sending district and the *Robert Frost Charter School* to cooperate creatively to meet a student's special education needs. The sending district will be required to provide the *Robert Frost Charter School* with a complete copy of each student's IEP for implementation and monitoring purposes.

O: ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

We are committed to building a strong and diverse community of learners who embrace our unique approach to education which respects the individual yet fosters collaboration.

Admission to the *Robert Frost Charter School* shall be open to any student who resides in the State of New Hampshire. Methods of admission shall not be designed, intended or used to discriminate or violate individual rights in any manner prohibited by law.

For the success of the school, prospective families will need to be educated on and be committed to our educational approach. We will provide interested families with literature and opportunities to learn about the school formally and informally from our School Administrator, Learning Coordinator, and teachers.

Admission Procedures:

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will follow the basic method of admissions that defines charter schools nationwide:

- Admission shall be blind.
- Should the number of applicants exceed capacity, students will be chosen by a lottery system, with a wait list developed from the lottery overflow.

At a minimum, the admissions process will include the following:

1. Prospective students and their families will tour the School and attend at least one informational meeting at which our educational approach and school expectations (including a commitment from families to volunteer in the school community) of students and their families will be explained.
2. Application packets with information about the School, and its philosophy and expectations of attending students and their families, will be shared, along with student-related policies. Parents will be asked to sign an agreement indicating their understanding of the School's Mission, volunteer commitments, and other expectations as part of the admission process.

3. Interested families will then submit their application.
4. A committee will review the applications to be sure all information is complete.
5. To successfully develop functioning classrooms and at the same time ensure the opportunity that our school experience is available to all, the school will offer space to students without previous Montessori experience.
6. Should applicants exceed the number of allotted slots, a formal lottery, organized by grade and Montessori experience will be held. Those not accepted in the lottery will be placed on a waiting list in the order determined by the lottery.
7. All accepted students will receive notification. Those who have been wait-listed will be notified.
8. Accepted students and their families will be required to sign an agreement to fulfill a certain number of volunteer hours in support of the school and to fill out Student and Family Interest Surveys that will assist teachers in the development of personally meaningful and relevant project-based learning experiences. No student will be enrolled without submitting these forms.
9. Soon after the enrollment process is complete, the *Robert Frost Charter School* will hold meetings for admitted students and their families and provide an orientation for students and families.

The Board of Trustees of the *Robert Frost Charter School* will establish an Admissions Committee. We reserve the right to have the Admissions Committee further develop and amend the specific admissions process during the planning year.

Enrollment Provisions

- *The Robert Frost Charter School* will offer automatic re-enrollment to its students, provided they are in good standing (as decided by a team including the Lead Teacher, Learning Coordinator and School Administrator). Families will have to provide a letter of intent to re-enroll by a stated date preceding the lottery, so there is clarity about available spaces.
- *The Robert Frost Charter School* will admit from the wait-list should space become available after the lottery.
- Siblings of children already enrolled at the School will receive preference.
- The Board will reserve the right to give preference in enrollment to children of School Faculty as part of the employee benefits package.
- Children of the Founders of the *Robert Frost Charter School* will receive priority for Placement, within a reasonable ratio of the student body, as a means of recognition of their sweat equity in establishing the School.

P: PHILOSOPHY OF STUDENT GOVERNANCE AND DISCIPLINE AND AGE APPROPRIATE DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES TO BE USED FOR DISCIPLINARY MATTERS, INCLUDING SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION.

A core value of the *Robert Frost Charter School* is the development of student character and leadership skills. In multi-age classrooms, and through our carefully designed curriculum, *Robert Frost Charter School* students will develop important self-monitoring, communication, and leadership skills as they progress academically and develop socially. Self discipline, self-advocacy, governance, communication and conflict resolution will be inherent to the curriculum. It will be a priority at the *Robert Frost Charter School* that students are physically and emotionally safe while at school. In our planning period, a code of ethics will be established to address this priority both with regard to infringements on safety and respect, and to create clear and meaningful methods of problem solving. To do so, we will draw on Dr. Maria Montessori's work which strongly emphasizes peace and conflict resolution. She developed many tools to help children and their teachers resolve disagreements and address problems and issues that arise in the school setting. Our Learning Coordinator will work to support teachers in addressing any behavior issues they are experiencing with students in their classrooms in a manner that is respectful of the student, their family and in keeping with our mission.

Our teachers will work collaboratively and interactively with their students to establish basic classroom rules and guidelines to be followed by all. Our children will learn to advocate for themselves and others, mediate and communicate to resolve conflicts, and establish and work with a system of integrity to rectify injury and achieve resolution in the context of our safe and peaceful environment.

Disrespectful or continually disruptive behavior will not be accepted. The School's written code of ethics will outline appropriate responses to such behaviors. All issues that resist being resolved within the classroom will be addressed with a team effort involving administrators, teachers and the student's family. Families will be partners in forming corrective behavior plans and involved at every stage of the process through meetings and written information. Although we will work to avoid it, expulsion from the school may be the end result of this process. A detailed behavioral expectation policy and discipline procedure policy will be established by staff and board members in the planning phase of our charter.

Q: METHOD OF ADMINISTERING FISCAL ACCOUNTS AND REPORTING, INCLUDING A PROVISION REQUIRING FISCAL AUDITS AND REPORTS TO BE PERFORMED BY AN INDEPENDENT CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will follow New Hampshire public school accounting guidelines and will put in place internal accounting controls necessary to safeguard its assets and prevent and detect financial statement misstatements. The School will maintain accurate financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for non-profit

corporations. An annual financial report will be provided including an audit by an independent certified public accountant.

The Board of Trustees will appoint a Treasurer to provide the oversight necessary for monitoring the financial status of the School. The Treasurer shall report the financial status of the School to the Board of Trustees at least monthly. The Board shall also adopt policies for the financial management of the School, including policies on conflicts of interest for Board members and Faculty. Accounting activities will consist primarily of the biweekly payroll paid to school personnel and the maintenance of an accounts payable system to track amounts due to vendors. The Board will approve an accounting policies and procedures manual to be followed by all employees, contractors and Board members to ensure the proper tracking and use of School funds.

A general account will be set up for the administration of funds, and the Treasurer and named members of the Board of Trustees will have check-writing authority. Two signatures will be required on all checks. Each individual with check-writing authority will be covered by a fidelity bond in accordance with the guidelines of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.

Except for emergency purchases approved by the School's authorized personnel (up to a maximum to be established by the Board of Trustees), all expenditures and contracts will be handled through an encumbrance system of purchase orders for clear tracking of expenditures and status of account balances.

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will comply with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B:10, I-V). This law requires an annual report, annual financial audit and report, program audit, and participation during the annual school budget process. The School will also comply with all requirements set forth in ED 318.07 regarding the contents of its annual report. As required by law the annual report will be provided to the state board, local board and any person who requests it. In addition a summary version of the annual report and periodic reports will be provided to the parent or guardian of each student at the School and shall be made available to the legislative body.

The Board will select an independent auditor annually to complete the required annual audit and report. The audit will address accounting practices and review the School's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with applicable generally accepted accounting principles. It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year. The Board of Trustees will review and respond to the audit report, if necessary, and include the audit results in its annual report.

R: ANNUAL BUDGET, INCLUDING SOURCES OF FUNDING

Please see the budget that appears in Appendix B.

The included budget reflects estimated expenses for the first four years of operations.

We have developed a list of our most likely and most important Mission-driven plans and costs, recognizing that the budget as represented surpasses the expected income in the first few years. *Appendix B* also includes expected sources of revenue related to the federal start-up grant, and the state per-pupil allotment based on our projected enrollment. Work to raise the additional funds necessary to support the budget has already begun and will increase in intensity once the charter has been granted. During our planning period we will also examine the feasibility of additional revenue sources, including extra-curricular activities, which might bring income as well as exposure to the School.

As mentioned in the introductory section of this application, we have entered into this project with the full understanding that the state per-pupil allotment is likely not enough to support a New Hampshire independent charter school's full goals and mission and guarantee sustainability. We will offset this gap through of the fundraising efforts of the Robert Frost Charter School Board of Trustees Fundraising Committee including securing grant monies, and private and corporate contributions. Strategic partnerships and other fundraising efforts will also be important. Rather than seek out a few high dollar investors, we hope to cultivate many committed supporters from the business community and the greater community to support the Mission of the *Robert Frost Charter School*.

From the outset, *Robert Frost Charter School* Founders, Board Members, staff and families will understand the need to make contributions to augment the state-provided funds in order to deliver the quality of educational services and variety of project-based opportunities that will make up the curriculum that is central to this project. Contributions from the School community will take many forms — volunteer time in the classroom or within the school, assistance in various areas dependent on expertise (computer support, construction, etc.), and possibly even financial contributions from individuals who choose to contribute in this way. All donations will be tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Once the *Robert Frost Charter School* has been established, the *Robert Frost Charter School Board of Trustees* will organize a fundraising committee. This committee's mission will be to support the School's economic viability. As the School's development arm, the committee will focus on securing the support of local, state and national foundations and charitable organizations as well as cultivating support from community members and businesses. The unique character of the School, its blend of individualized instruction and Project-Based Learning approach to teaching and the resource and value it brings to our local community will be highlighted in our fundraising efforts. A major focus of the committee will be to begin to develop an endowment fund. School-focused fundraising will include events small and large, aimed at financial gain and the solidifying of the School community and Mission.

S: SCHOOL CALENDAR ARRANGEMENT AND THE NUMBER AND DURATION OF DAYS PUPILS ARE TO BE SERVED PURSUANT TO RSA 194-B: 8, III.

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will follow, at a minimum, a 180-day school year in accordance with the RSA 194-B:8, III, and expects to follow the calendar of our host district in order to best coordinate transportation services. Any school-specific changes to the schedule will be monitored carefully to ensure that our students meet the required number of attendance hours.

It is expected that days will begin at approximately 8:30 am and end at 3:00 pm, though some flexibility may be required to meet our host district's bus route schedule. Should transportation issues result in lost educational hours, we will address this loss and amend our students' school hours.

T: PROVISION FOR PROVIDING CONTINUING EVIDENCE OF ADEQUATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Pursuant to RSA 194-B:1, the *Robert Frost Charter School* will be a public school afforded the same protections as all other public schools under RSA 507(b), which provides for limited general liability for the charter school and its agents. The Board will procure and provide evidence of adequate insurance coverage as required by the State, including but not limited to general liability for the School.

U: IDENTITY OF CONSULTANTS TO BE USED FOR VARIOUS SERVICES, IF KNOWN

We are fortunate to have found many local and national advisors and consultants from the field of education, as well as practicing educators and administrators with rich experience who are excited about our school concept and willing to share their wisdom and experience with us as we work to develop our school program. From among these, we have identified the following people as consultants and friends of the *Robert Frost Charter School*:

Charles M. Reigeluth

Dr. Charles Reigeluth is a professor in the Instructional Systems Technology Department at Indiana University. His research focuses on paradigm change in public education and the design of high quality instruction. He has been facilitating a paradigm change process in the Decatur Township Schools in Indianapolis since 2001. Professor Reigeluth is internationally known for his work on instructional methods and theories. His most recent research includes advancing knowledge about personalized, integrated, technology systems that support the learner-centered paradigm of education. Helping schools to attain dramatic improvements is his passion. He has published nine books and over 150 journal articles and chapters on those subjects, and two of his books received an "outstanding book of the year" award from the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). He co-founded the

Division for Systemic Change in AECT and founded the Restructuring Support Service at Indiana University. He has received the "Distinguished Service" award from AECT and the "Honored Alumnus" award from Brigham Young University's School of Education. Dr. Reigeluth has a B.A. in Economics from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in Instructional Psychology from Brigham Young University.

Juliet Fleischer

Juliet Fleischer is the directress of Mountain View Montessori School, a private Montessori school serving the Mount Washington Valley since 1995. Before moving to the area and opening her school, Juliet taught junior high in Melbourne, Florida. Juliet is certified by the American Montessori Society in both early childhood and lower elementary education. She presents workshops for early childhood educators working in many settings from Montessori to traditional and has designed her own Montessori-based lessons for spelling, science and history which have been shared with and adopted by many Montessori schools. Through her work with the NH Montessori Association, where she is Vice President, the Mount Washington Valley Preschool Directors Group and the Mount Washington Children's Museum, she has shared her passion for the Montessori approach to teaching and learning with the greater community.

Christine Brown

Christine Brown is the Owner, Director and Head Teacher at the Merrimack Valley Montessori School in Salem, New Hampshire. Originally a middle school/high school science teacher in her native England, Chris completed her Montessori training after her four children went through the Merrimack Valley Montessori School and joined its staff in 1994. She is the President of the New Hampshire Montessori Association.

Corinne Rocco

Corinne Rocco is the principal of Freedom Elementary School and has been for the last six years. She has served as an administrator in both NH and ME for the last twelve years and has served on many state and local committees on educational issues and has been a member of the state assessment program (now NECAP). She is certified as an Experienced Educator and

Administrator in both states and has worked continuously to improve education in the Mt. Washington Valley. Corinne has brought technology, gifted and talented, all day Kindergarten and other progressive educational programs to her school. Her focus is always on the “whole child” and has accomplished much in this area. She has been involved with People to People for the last fifteen years and has brought students from NH, ME, MA and from all over the country overseas to be immersed in another culture and to learn about how other people live. Most recently, she has been involved in Student Leadership Programs in Washington D.C. with both national and international students. This summer, she will facilitate a Leadership Summit at Harvard University for international students.

V: PHILOSOPHY OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND RELATED PLANS AND PROCEDURES

The students of *the Robert Frost Charter School* will achieve the greatest success when our teachers and families work together. We see families as key participants in the building of the school community and the success of the program. The regular presence of our students’ parents/guardians will be an integral part of the landscape of the *Robert Frost Charter School*.

Family involvement will begin even before admission. As part of the enrollment process, parents/guardians will be asked to sign an agreement indicating their understanding of the Mission and expectations of the students and their families.

We will ask that families participate in school activities as schedules allow, contributing a designated number of hours of volunteer service during the course of the school year. These volunteer experiences can and will take many shapes and forms including, but not limited to supporting classroom activities, providing needed skills or services, organizing or facilitating school events or fundraisers, etc. Parents will also be valued members of our Board of Trustees (see *Governance, Section B*) and fundraising Foundation. We recognize that parent education is an important part of healthy child development and academic success and, as a result, the *Robert Frost Charter School* will work with families to provide informational sessions or training opportunities on topics of value to families, such as elements that make up our educational philosophy (including the Montessori Method and Project-Based Learning), parenting topics and other areas of interest.

Parents/guardians of children at *The Robert Frost Charter School* will receive regular reports on their children’s academic and emotional growth through progress reports and regular parent/teacher conferences (see *Assessment, Section H*).

Central to our educational approach will be the empowerment of both parents and their children to become advocates for their education, while encouraging respectful and thoughtful dialogue and we will encourage that sense of advocacy by facilitating two-way communication through a variety of means such as written feedback, surveys, and meetings.

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will be committed to the education of everyone in our community — our students, our teachers, the families we serve, board members as well as business and community collaborators. We will seek to bring a variety of educational opportunities to the School, and aim to shape the School in a way that encourages people from within and beyond the school community to come together to become engaged, learn, and grow.

W: PLAN TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO PARENTS AND PUPILS

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will employ many forms of outreach to recruit and inform potential students and their families of the opportunity the School will provide. Because the *Robert Frost Charter School* stands to be the first charter school in Carroll County, we will need to educate families and the greater community about our School. Work in this area will begin as soon as the charter has been granted. Utilizing literature and organizing gatherings at a variety of locations, we will introduce the concept and educational philosophy, mission and goals of the *Robert Frost Charter School*.

Working with community leaders, we will develop outreach materials and approaches appropriate for various audiences. Once the School is in operation, we will offer tours and observation opportunities as we move towards our goal of becoming a lab school for teacher preparation programs. We will also employ new technologies, creating an informative website, among other tools, to help our community gain a better understanding of the School and make an informed decision before submitting their application materials.

The Board will have a recruitment committee and will partner with several service organizations working in and around the Conway area to build our student body. The *Robert Frost Charter School* will establish relationships with members of the Conway school district as well as other area districts, and with potential feeder schools (including but not limited to private Montessori Pre-K/Kindergarten programs in the state).

X: GLOBAL HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE

The *Robert Frost Charter School*, its successors and assigns, covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless any school district which sends its students to the charter School, and their school boards, officers, directors, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources, and their successors and assigns, (the "Indemnified Parties") from any and all claims, demands actions and causes of action, whether in law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses, and expenses, including but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees and legal costs, for any action or inaction of the charter school, its board, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils. The School shall have no obligation to hold harmless the Indemnified Parties for any claims, damages, losses, or expenses resulting from the Indemnified Parties' own acts or omissions.

Y: SEVERABILITY PROVISIONS AND STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

If any part of the charter contract is determined to be invalid or illegal by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidation or illegality shall not affect the remaining portions of the charter contract, which shall remain in full force and effect. Any provision of the charter school contract found by competent authority to be contrary to applicable law, rule, or regulation shall not be enforceable.

Z: PROVISION FOR DISSOLUTIONS

If the *Robert Frost Charter School* ceases operation, the Board shall consult with an attorney and the Department of Education to assure that contractual and financial obligations are met.

Upon the dissolution of the School, the assets remaining after the payment of all its liabilities, and the return of any loaned items to rightful owners, shall be distributed to such organization or organizations operated exclusively for charitable or educational purposes that qualify as an exempt organization within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986, or any corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to state or local government, for a public educational purpose.

AA: IN THE CASE OF THE CONVERSION OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL TO A CHARTER CONVERSION SCHOOL, PROVISION FOR ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUPILS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO ATTEND AND TEACHERS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO TEACH AT THE CHARTER SCHOOL

Not Applicable.

BB: A PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE SCHOOL'S PUPILS AFTER THE CHARTER SCHOOL MAY CEASE OPERATION

In the event that *Robert Frost Charter School* shall have cause to cease operation, the Head of School will work with the Board to develop a student transfer process and advise all parents/guardians, Staff and Faculty of the process to be followed. To complete each student's personal file, parents/guardians shall be asked to provide a statement of intent regarding their children's education, moving forward. The *Robert Frost Charter School* will obtain parent/guardian permission for release of information in order to notify the new schools of the impending transfers. *Robert Frost Charter School* Staff, Faculty and Board will make every effort to be available for consultation, sharing students' portfolios, individualized learning plans and other relevant materials with the receiving school. It is important to remember that our students' Montessori experience will be linked to the *NH Core Curriculum*, and so though they may be more practiced in independent work and have developed other Montessori-related skills, it is expected that these children will easily matriculate into other schools and be at or above grade level.

Each family will also receive notice by mail, in a timely fashion, advising them of the dissolution of the School and the plan for student transition. The *Robert Frost Charter School* will also help guide families toward options that may best match their needs and abilities academically, and if appropriate, geographically. And of course the School will ensure that the receiving schools have appropriate information to facilitate the students' transitions.

CC: IN ADDITION TO AN APPLICATION, EACH CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICANT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD, SHALL PREPARE A PROPOSED CONTRACT.

Not Applicable.

DD: AN OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN WHICH CLARIFIES EXPECTATIONS FOR EVALUATING THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM AND WHICH CONTAINS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT A FULL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN SHALL BE DEVELOPED AND READY TO IMPLEMENT PRIOR TO THE DATE OF THE OPENING.

The *Robert Frost Charter School* will provide the New Hampshire State Department of Education with reports on our programs and progress annually. Utilizing a variety of curriculum-based and other assessment tools as well as data collected from our students, we will measure and quantify student, classroom and school progress in all learning domains. Surveys, interviews and informal feedback from Faculty/Staff and families will enable us to gain deeper insight into our overall educational impact and success including the evaluation of our non-academic goals such as parent involvement, learning atmosphere and stake-holder satisfaction. We will share information about our progress in relation to all of our goals with our school community annually. In addition, our annual reports will inform the Department about our student enrollment, financial operations and governance.

This reporting will address the following questions:

1. Is the School making progress toward achieving our Mission?
2. Is the School responsibly using public funds?
3. Is the School promoting student attainment of expected knowledge and skills?
4. Is the School sustainable?

Our accountability plan will be fully developed prior to the date of opening.

Founding Members

Jennifer Karnopp
Ellen Ohlenbusch
Juliet Fleischer

Corinne Rocco
Sarah Sartory
Angela Zakon

Appendix A: Robert Frost Charter School Founder Bios

Juliet Fleischer is the directress of Mountain View Montessori school, a private Montessori school serving the Mount Washington Valley since 1995. Before moving to the area and opening her school, Juliet taught junior high in Melbourne, Florida. Juliet is certified by the American Montessori Association in both early childhood and lower elementary education. She presents workshops for early childhood educators working in many settings from Montessori to traditional and has designed her own Montessori-based lessons for spelling, science and history which have been shared with and adapted by many Montessori schools. Currently the Mountain View Montessori School serves children in preschool and kindergarten only. In the past the Mountain View Montessori School has had a strong lower elementary program. Through her work with the NH Montessori Association, where she is Vice President, the Mount Washington Valley Preschool Directors Group and the Mount Washington Children's Museum, she has shared her passion for the Montessori approach to teaching and learning with the greater community.

Jennifer Karnopp is the owner and curriculum developer for World of Wonder, a company specializing in teaching materials for early learning environments. As an independent consultant, Jennifer has created product-based teacher guides for national and international companies and presents teacher training workshops at local, state and national levels. Jennifer served as the President of the Founding Board of the Mount Washington Valley Children's Museum in North Conway, NH and serves on the advisory committee of the Connie Davis Watson Foundation. She is also the author of *Family Child Care Basics: Advice, Activities, and Information to Create a Professional Program* published by Gryphon House, Inc. Before beginning World of Wonder, Jennifer taught preschool and elementary school children in a variety of traditional and non-traditional learning environments from Children's Museums to public schools. Currently Jennifer is pursuing a Masters in Special Education and is the mother of two young children.

Ellen Ohlenbusch is an Internet safety & cyber bullying expert, author, speaker and a founder of McGruff SafeGuard. She has developed educational and technology tools for parents, educators and law enforcement groups to ensure the safety of children while they are on-line and has worked directly with many communities around the country on Internet safety. McGruff SafeGuard, partnering with the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), works to protect thousands of families while they are exploring the internet! McGruff SafeGuard's product was featured on the Oprah show as a leading solution for protecting children online and for providing the technology free to parents ensuring that they have access to the technology tools required to protect their children. Prior to her work in McGruff SafeGuard, Ellen had a track record of success in early stage start-up ventures including Avaiil, Inc., GlobalSCAPE, Infinium and Omtool. Ellen has 20 years of technical sales, marketing and management experience. Ellen is also a current board member of the MWV Children's Museum and is has a young daughter with two years of Montessori kindergarten and pre-school education.

Corinne Rocco is the principal of Freedom Elementary School and has been for the last six years. She has served as an administrator in both NH and ME for the last twelve years and has served on many state and local committees on educational issues and has been a member of the state assessment program (now NECAP). She is certified as an Experienced Educator and Administrator in both states and has worked continuously to improve education in the Mt. Washington Valley. Corinne has brought technology, gifted and talented, all day Kindergarten and other progressive educational programs to her school. Her focus is always on the “whole child” and has accomplished much in this area. She has been involved with People to People for the last fifteen years and has brought students from NH, ME, MA and from all over the country overseas to be immersed in another culture and to learn about how other people live. Most recently, she has been involved in Student Leadership Programs in Washington D.C. with both national and international students. This summer, she will facilitate a Leadership Summit at Harvard University for international students.

Sarah Sartory is a stay at home mom of two daughters, ages 4 and 6. She is the President of the Board of Directors for The Lilliputian Montessori School, a non-profit Preschool and Kindergarten in North Conway, NH. Sarah is passionate about her children's education and believes in the well-rounded, child-centered approach that a Montessori education offers. The ability to have a public school with an alternative, creative educational model is a dream of Sarah's, and she is committed to making it happen for her children and the children of her community.

Angela Zakon is a senior accountant at Leone, McDonnell & Roberts P.A. where she specializes in audits, tax compliance and financial management of nonprofit organizations. Her clients range from small volunteer run organizations to larger non-profits that receive extensive government (federal and state) funding. She has assisted numerous clients in developing and implementing internal controls, writing accounting policies and procedures manuals, drafting financial statements and complying with numerous state and federal reporting requirements. Before moving to the Mount Washington Valley in 2001, she was a Business Assurance Manager at the international accounting firm of Cooper & Lybrand, LLC, and Vice President at AuditWatch where she provided services to accounting firms to improve the quality and efficiency of audits. As an expert in the areas of compliance, internal controls, financial reporting and risk assessment, she has presented programs for local nonprofit leaders through the Non-For-Profit Boot Camp Series through the Mount Washington Valley Economic Council. Angela was a founding board member and treasurer for the Mount Washington Valley Children's Museum. She is currently a board member for the White Mountain Community Health Center and the treasurer of the Pine Tree School Parent Teacher Association. She lives in Center Conway with her husband and two elementary age sons.